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ABSTRACT

The state of Victoria (Australia) needs a well-educated, adaptable work force to face the numerous challenges stemming from the following: shifts in employment toward "knowledge workers"; the impact of competition, technological change, and microeconomic reform; aging of the population; disparate views regarding the purpose of education; and the increasing internationalization of capital, labor, and education. To cope with these and other changes, Victoria must ensure that people can learn throughout their working lives by working focusing on the following strategic directions: establishing new, more effective relationships between industry, students, service providers, and government (providing client-oriented differentiated services; planning and implementing industry-specific training strategies; improving industry and community understanding of the benefits of training and further education); giving meaningful expression to learning through life (meeting the increasing demand for just-in-time training, teaching people to learn, recognizing individual learners as primary clients); providing leadership in learning through new technologies (improving learning outcomes, enabling universal access to training, ensuring that local communities retain a major influence over work force training); and securing and developing resources for the future (ensuring that the level and mix of human and financial resources available to training and further education are flexible and adaptable enough to achieve desired outcomes). (MN)

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A Vision *for* Training *and* Further Education in Victoria

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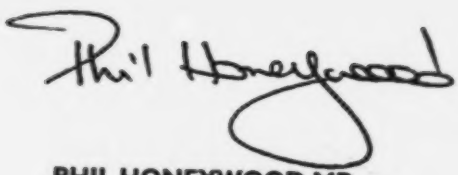
Foreword

A Vision for Training and Further Education in Victoria sets out the State Training Board's directions for training and further education into the next century.

The Vision was developed by the Board from a systematic consideration of current strategies, emerging trends and drivers of training and further education, as well as alternative scenarios about the future.

I believe the Vision provides a strong basis for leadership and direction across the Victorian training system over the next five years as the Board focuses on the provision of world class training and further education.

I have pleasure in endorsing *A Vision for Training and Further Education in Victoria*.



PHIL HONEYWOOD MP

Minister for Tertiary Education and Training

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Preamble

This strategic vision was developed by the State Training Board from a systematic consideration of current strategies, emerging trends and drivers of training and further education. The Board also considered alternative scenarios about the future, to assist in understanding future uncertainties and in developing strategies that would be effective in the future.

The Board believes that the vision will provide a basis for leadership and direction in the development of detailed policies, strategies, action plans and services across the Victorian training system for the next five years.

Further details about the Board's planning process can be obtained from the Office of Training and Further Education (OTFE) or by visiting the OTFE web site (http://www.otfe.vic.gov.au).

Vision ***World class training and further education in Victoria, producing a skilled and empowered community to meet the world of tomorrow, supporting the international competitiveness of Victorian industry and enhancing economic and social opportunities for Victorians.***

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Introduction

From time to time the State Training Board sets directions for training and further education (TAFE) in Victoria, outlining the broad vision for the system, its objectives and a range of strategies to achieve them.

The last direction-setting statement by the Board, *Strategic Directions for Vocational Education and Training*, was issued in 1994. Many of the objectives that were set at that time have been achieved or exceeded.

Need for New Direction

Equally importantly, in the relatively short time of four years since the last strategic plan, there have been significant changes in national and State training and further education policies and activities.

These significant changes include:

- the adoption and roll-out of national competency standards, training packages, and a new emphasis on assessment
- the adoption of the New Apprenticeships system linked to provider and course user choice
- the introduction of competition principles
- the rationalisation of TAFE Institutes
- the development and implementation of new learning technologies and administrative systems, including the creation of the 'Virtual Campus'
- the development and roll-out of a quality framework across the sector.

Over and above these changes, the Board is motivated by a strong conviction that the future presents significant and new challenges and opportunities which require a new understanding and revised direction. Jobs are changing and with them the skills needed for the world of tomorrow. We must be at the forefront in preparing for this new time.

Trends in the economy and the world of work, and in society generally, challenge aspects of the current approach to the provision of training and further education, unlike the challenges in any previous period in our sector's history.

There is an increasing realisation in our community that in the future Australia will need to depend more on the skills and knowledge of its people and less on its vast natural wealth.

The demands of the new information revolution have reversed the typical, machine-driven production process. New knowledge workers – growing in number to become the majority of the overall workforce – are being required to handle such a variety of different tasks that it is becoming difficult to define with precision their skill needs.

The workers who remain on production lines have to be multi-skilled, so they can switch from one task to another at short notice and recognise and resolve problems as they arise. From the point of view of the workforce, especially those who are unskilled or semi-skilled, the change has been dramatic. The demand now is for highly skilled and even better educated workers. People now entering the workforce can expect to change their occupation several times in their working lives.

These changes in the composition of the workforce mean that the number of unskilled and semi-skilled jobs, especially full-time jobs, is declining. Those workers who are not trained to meet the changed needs, or are unable to adapt, inevitably risk long-term unemployment.

It is an unfortunate fact that workers with low levels of education and training or limited English are precisely the ones who participate least in processes of skills renewal. Levels of literacy in the community leave no room for complacency. A major challenge is to assist people to overcome these deficiencies.

Governments, firms and individuals invest in training because it helps to:

- provide workers and industry with the skills they need to operate successfully
- improve productivity
- improve economic efficiency by allocating human resources between industries, occupations, regions and time, and by reducing the costs to the community and individuals of adjustment to structural change
- improve workforce flexibility, adaptability and overall workplace 'literacy'
- assist individuals to meet their work, earning and life aspirations.

Understandably, industry and individuals within the current training culture tend to focus more on their short-run needs. If our intention is to make Australia the 'clever country', to live more on enterprise and skill, then what is required by government and its agencies is a longer term view and to stimulate an improved training culture.

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To ensure that a strategic approach to the skill needs of the community is taken, governments will need to:

- fulfil the role as a major training purchaser, consultant and advocate
- ensure the capacity for flexibility and responsiveness to client needs
- ensure high quality private and public training provision
- ensure training is provided as a component of the social safety net.

To be successful, training providers will need to be able to assist small businesses in developing business plans and human resource strategies which, through increased or better quality training, lead to improved productivity and enhanced competitiveness. They will need to acquire an improved understanding of the dynamics of learning for work. A new emphasis on lifelong learning is required with a much broader focus on adult learning than in the past.

The major nature of these challenges to the community and Victoria's training system has led the State Training Board to adopt a far-sighted view and to offer leadership to providers and others with an interest in training and further education. This strategic statement shows the path forward in a visionary but practical and realisable way.

Challenges

Victoria needs a well educated and adaptable workforce. To cope with rapid change we need to ensure that people can learn throughout their working lives. The challenges facing the community and the State Training System arise from:

- the shifts in employment towards 'knowledge workers' (people who deal with information), away from traditional unskilled and semi-skilled jobs, and the need for ongoing improvements in literacy in workplaces
- the impact of competition, technological change and micro-economic reform on employment, increasing part-time, casual and contract work, and the need for people to change jobs more often in their work lives
- the growing disparity in income and wealth
- the ageing of the population and increasing cultural diversity
- the disparate views in the community about the purpose of education including a renewed focus on social and civic values
- the increasing internationalisation of capital, labour and education
- the ongoing demand from government for efficiency within constrained or reducing budgets
- the declining expenditure by industry on structured training

- the application of new technology to education and training
- the demands for communicating with an increasingly diverse and complex market
- the increasing customer demand for services which meet their needs and expectations.

Opportunities

As a response to these challenges the Board sees a range of opportunities for taking the State Training System into the future. These include:

- services available through a greater variety of access points including:
  - teaching institutions
  - learning centres
  - community organisations
  - community resources, such as libraries
  - work places
  - home access via the internet
- teaching materials and a significant proportion of skills training via new learning technologies as techniques improve and as technology changes many skilled occupations
- more clients being empowered to demand quality as they themselves pay more towards the cost of their post-initial training
- the development of 'invisible' or 'virtual' providers utilising enhanced communications networks
- emerging national and international alliances between multi-media system developers, teaching material developers and owner/managers of delivery systems
- increased freedom for students and industry to move between public, community and private providers
- a growing response to market demand for short courses or modules
- provision of a range of services to small business, not just training, as a better strategic investment
- competency based training augmented by additional approaches to teaching and learning which are appropriate for the particular purpose. This will incorporate new knowledge about learning associated with new technologies
- students putting together 'bundles' of training materials and training experiences as they need

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- teachers/trainers who are competent in new technologies, more learner centred/driven approaches, and new relationships with industry clients

- training organisations employing a core of permanent full-time staff with the rest employed flexibly to ensure they have up-to-date knowledge of the rapidly changing world of work

- building upon the solid foundations of recent improvements across the State Training System that has given particular emphasis to enhanced quality, innovation, efficiency, accessibility, and client orientation

- promoting productive diversity in enterprises to fully utilise the many skills that already exist in their workforces.

Implications for Strategy

Reference is often made to the weak training culture in Australia. The challenges and opportunities the community faces mean that our objective as a community should be to increase the priority and expenditure on developing our human resources. This needs support by a range of activities not just limited to formal training or to current elements of national and State training reform agendas.

Strategic Directions

To ensure that the State Training System makes its proper contribution to the objective of an adaptable, skilled community, future strategies need to focus on:

- establishing new, more effective relationships between industry, students, service providers and government
- giving meaningful expression to learning through life
- providing leadership in learning through new technologies
- securing and developing resources for the future.

Objectives

Building New Relationships	To provide client-oriented, differentiated services; to plan and implement industry-specific training strategies; to improve industry and community understanding of the benefits of training and further education; and to develop the role of industry and enterprises in training.
Learning through Life	To meet lifelong learning needs, including the increasing demand for just-in-time training, learning to learn, the ability to understand and participate in the process of change, and people skills. In this context to recognise each individual learner as a primary client, both on- and off-the-job.
Learning through New Technologies	To improve learning outcomes; to enable universal access to training; and to ensure that the Victorian and Australian communities retain a major influence over the education and training process of the workforce.
Flexible Resourcing	To ensure that the level and mix of human and financial resources available to training and further education are sufficiently flexible and adaptable to achieve the desired outcomes.

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Strategies to Achieve Objectives

1. Building New Relationships

Purpose

- Adopt new approaches to identifying needs, defining services and products, and delivering services in the emerging environment including, but by no means limited to, the funding of training and further education.
- Develop new forms of relating to clients in planning, development, communication and delivery to satisfy the increasing differentiation of the market.

Broad Strategies

- Set standards and curriculum locally, as well as at State and national levels, to suit individual needs and circumstances.
- Negotiate industry-specific strategies for the State Training System's contribution to skill formation. These strategies to be developed with increased opportunities and incentives for industry, enterprises and students to contribute to costs. A range of possible services to be offered by providers, some of which do not necessarily lead to training delivery.
- Achieve better integration with industry policy.
- Foster better understanding of existing and new markets.
- Facilitate strategic and tactical alliances and partnerships across the system to meet needs and to develop programs.
- Encourage industry to make greater use of Australia's multicultural makeup by promoting the benefits of productive diversity.

2. Learning through Life

Purpose

- Recognise the student as a primary client both off-the-job and on-the-job.
- Ensure that lifelong learning needs and goals – including the increasing demand for just-in-time training, learning to learn, multi-skilling, the ability to understand and participate in the process of change, the ability to accept difference, people skills, and communication skills – are met in courses, curriculum, training packages, standards and outcomes.

Broad Strategies

- Broaden the criteria for granting accreditation of programs.
- Facilitate students' desire to acquire skills and knowledge not necessarily tied to qualifications.
- Provide information to clients on future employment options.
- Establish mechanisms to obtain student views to help shape services.
- Recognise prior educational experience across qualifications and sectors.
- Simplify the movement of students between schools, training and further education providers, community providers and universities.

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3. Learning through New Technologies

Purpose

- Adopt a holistic approach to system-wide planning and the implementation of major structural and cultural change associated with new technologies.
- Adopt leadership in promoting community debate about the impact of new technologies to help identify important values which need to be fostered or protected in our education systems.

Broad Strategies

- Develop services to suit clients' future needs – to increase access, improve quality of outcomes and ensure students' computer literacy – involving different organisational and administrative arrangements where necessary.
- Take new approaches towards management development, professional development, product/service development, market development and equity of access to new technology.
- Create opportunities to discuss the broader social and educational issues.
- Develop flexible delivery and on-line learning strategies which provide training and further education which meets each learner's individual needs.

4. Flexible Resourcing

Purpose

- Ensure that public responsibilities continue to be met and that individuals and enterprises contribute to the development of skills and knowledge.

Broad Strategies

- Increase flexibility and cost effectiveness in asset planning and management.
- Develop staff to operate effectively in the emerging environment.
- Secure an adequate supply of skilled staff for all aspects of training and further education in the future.
- Achieve a balance in the contribution towards costs of provision between those benefitting – the community, students, enterprises and industry.
- Ensure that quality and accountability systems are appropriate to the changing provision of services.

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